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REPORT
OF A
HOUSING SURVEY
MADE IN
URBANA, ILLINOIS

BY
JOSEPHINE NEWELL

THESIS
FOR THE
DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS
IN
SOCIOLOGY

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES
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Josephine Newell

ENTITLED Report of a Housing Survey Made in Urbana, Illinois

IS APPROVED BY ME AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I	Foreword	1
II	Introduction	4
III	Results of Study.....	7
	Sanitary Conditions	7
	Land and Room Crowding.....	14
	Light and Heat	17
	Fire Hazards	17
	Noise, Smoke and Danger from Trains	18
	Streets.....	18
	General Appearance of Houses	18
	Lodgers.....	19
	People	19
	Apartment Houses	19
	Rent	21
IV	Summary	23
V	Conclusion	26
	Suggested Remedies.....	26



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Report of
HOUSING SURVEY in URBANA, ILLINOIS
¹
Foreword,

Men and women everywhere are realizing that environment has a decided effect, wholesome, or otherwise, upon human beings. Furthermore, they are coming to see that housing conditions, which are a part of this environment, influence them strongly, affecting their health, morals, and happiness. Certain housing conditions enable men and women to live healthier, more elevated, and happier lives; others enervate, degrade, and depress. According to a study made by Miss Harriet Fulmer, Superintendent of the Visiting Nurses' Association of Chicago;¹ "Two-thirds of the delinquent children come from homes where dirty, ill-ventilated, rooms predominate; two-thirds of the physically ill children from the same; one-third of the shiftless mothers from the same; two-thirds of the deserting fathers from the same." Of course, it is plain that many factors, other than that of housing enter into these situations. However, Miss Fulmer is probably safe in assuming a correlation between bad housing and the delinquency and disease in these cases.

Dr. Charles D. Underhill² says, "Dampness, darkness, and poor ventilation are the most potent predisposing causes of ~~causes of~~ many serious ailments that either endanger life or greatly limit its usefulness." The Rt. Honorable James Bryce, late British Ambassador to the United States³ said, "The place in which a man or woman dwells is vital to the character of the man, or woman. To begin with there is the consideration of health and all that follows

1. Report of Board of Public Welfare, Kansas City, Mo. p. 3

2. Underhill, C.D., City Wilderness p.66

3. Survey of Housing Conditions in Richmond, Va. p. 9

from bad health. Depressed vitality is a most fruitful cause of intemperance. Bad housing is one of the direct causes of that evil. Cleanliness is not only a condition for health, it is a condition for self-respect. It is a condition for the elevation of the whole life of the man or woman, that he or she should be able to feel that they are living with a standard to maintain with an ideal to live up to, something to respect."

We might now ask what^{are} these housing conditions which are so detrimental, or otherwise. The Rev. Luther E. Lovejoy, late of the Detroit (Mich.) Housing Commission, has characterized bad housing as consisting of "houses that are poorly lighted, unventilated, damp, imperfectly drained, exposed to undue fire peril, in bad repair, vermin-infected, disease infected, with unclean surroundings, with insufficient water supply, without toilet accommodations adequate for comfort, cleanliness, and privacy, with defective plumbing, with overcrowded rooms and with cellar tenements."

Little has been done toward defining good housing, save to say that it is housing without these objectionable features. The definition, then, of good housing is largely a negative one. However this is probably fair enough; we are justified in saying that whatever does not menace health, happiness, and morals, is good. Emphasis may properly be placed upon determining what is injurious to life, rather than in looking directly for the harmless. A first step in improving a community - and this is that for which studies of housing conditions are made - is to hunt for and weed out what is harmful. Direct establishing of the good may properly come later.

As has just been stated, housing surveys are made for the purpose of improving communities thru showing people the extent and intensity of bad housing conditions in those communities; also the means by which these bad conditions may be eliminated. In some instances, surveys may be made to prove the underlying assumption that certain features in housing, such as lack of light, air, pure water, etc. are detrimental. This latter object may be made a part of the surveys first described. For instance, investigators, after finding that the water supply, and toilet arrangements, among certain houses are inadequate and unsanitary may compare the amount of disease and the death rate among these houses with that among houses having a pure water supply, and sanitary toilet arrangements. If a greater amount of disease, or higher death rate prevails among the houses lacking good water and sanitary arrangements, there is little doubt that these conditions are objectionable.

For a variety of reasons, housing surveys have usually dealt with the conditions in the larger cities and towns. A small number have, however, described conditions in medium sized towns and in the country. Almost none have dealt with small towns, of twenty-five hundred and under. None that the author knows of, tell of the housing situation in a small, middle-western town in the midst of a farming district.

Assuming that useful data might be had, a survey was made of Urbana, Illinois, a city of the kind of ~~cities~~ just described.

INTRODUCTION

Urbana, Illinois, the scene of the housing survey described in the following pages, is a city of ten thousand inhabitants, situated near the center of Illinois in the heart of the corn belt. It is therefore, as has been stated, in a prosperous section of the country. As it is surrounded by farms, it is naturally a trading center for the owners of these farms. It is also the County Seat and the division point for the Big Four Railroad. This means that the repair shops of the railroad are located in Urbana. Altho a few small industrial establishments are situated here, it is not an industrial town. The inhabitants are mostly retired farmers, business men, workers in the railroad shops, etc., and members of the faculty of the University of Illinois, which is found on the west side of town. To the superficial observer, it is a place of moderate-sized, comfortable looking homes. However in the north and northeast sections of the town quite a number of small, shabby-looking houses exist. It was known that Negroes and the poorest of the white population, mostly workers in the Shops, lived in these houses. Therefore it was believed that if Urbana had a housing problem,¹ it would be found in these parts of town. Hence these parts were selected as the field of the housing survey.

As another investigation which was to include housing conditions among the negroes was to have been carried on in the immediate future, the part of town where they were known to predominate was excluded from the field of the present survey. This meant that the area lying directly north of the town proper was excluded.

1. It is a matter of common knowledge that conditions in student rooming-houses need improving, but the deans of men and women in the University are already dealing with this problem.

The northeast part of town, only, is covered by the present survey.

The northeast part is that bounded on the south by East Main Street, on the north and east by open country, and on the west by North Market Street. It is approximately a mile square. Naturally this section of town falls into two parts, that south of the Big Four Shops, and that north of them. The houses in the latter form a community quite separate from the rest of town. Locally this community is known by the name of Criminal Hill.

As has been suggested before, the problem ~~of~~ underlying this survey was that of determining the character of the worst housing conditions existing in Urbana, as a matter of general interest, and with a view of remedying them.

In the part of Urbana selected for the survey there are but a few more than one hundred houses. As one hundred made a convenient number to deal with, and as the houses in excess of this number are mostly the obviously superior ones on East Main Street, one hundred, only, were chosen as the basis of this survey. In this part of the city there are no multiple dwellings. However, so that the conditions in at least one could be observed, one, -known to be of a poorer type,- which was outside the district was visited.

The study was planned by the author of the survey, with the help of Prof. E.C. Hayes and Mr. S.A. Queen, of the department of sociology of the University of Illinois. Many suggestions found in the reports of similar surveys carried on in other cities, towns, and in the country, were followed.

The schedule card reproduced here is the one used in making the survey. On it are based the following conclusions as to the housing conditions in a part of Urbana. After the survey was well

FRONT

Address	Nat. Oc. <i>Nationality Occupant 1919.</i>
Ldl. landlord	Ad. <i>dress of landlord</i>
Occupation of landlord	Rent pd. on premises in off. <i>ice</i>
Agent	Ad. <i>dress of agent.</i>
Rent	Ass. value <i>assessed value.</i>
Total income	Size lot
No. persons in house	Size house
No. rooms " "	Stories
No. bed rooms " "	Nat. house <i>Material of house</i>
Size smallest bdr.	Dist. near. house <i>distance of nearest house</i>
Windows in smallest bdr. no. of	Wind. opp.
Adults	Heat
Child. m. 0-5	Gas - electricity
<i>male</i> 6-14	
Child. f. 0-5	L. room <i>living room</i>
<i>female</i> 6-14	
Cellar, use	D. room <i>dining room</i>
Flor. dry, damp, wet	Pantry
Flor. mat. <i>material</i>	Closets
Wall mat. "	Attic
Wind. no. grates	Bck. bdr. <i>back bedroom</i>
Wind. broken	Rep. <i>exterior</i> Roof <i>repair of</i>
Ceil. above ground <i>height above</i>	Rep. <i>interior</i>
Rubbish in <i>cellar</i>	C. L. int. <i>cleanliness of interior.</i>
Foundations	Gen. app. <i>general appearance</i>
Vents	

BACK

TOILET	Privy, dist. <i>and from house</i>
Wind. ex. in. <i>exterior, interior.</i>	Walk <i>leading to privy.</i>
Size wind. <i>no</i>	Fly proof
Transom	Window
Vented	Bldg. rep. <i>air</i>
Repair room	Bldg. cl. <i>cleanliness.</i>
Repair Plumbing	OUTHOUSES, no.
Cleanliness of	Kind
Well, covered used	Rep. <i>air</i>
Kind of well	Cl. <i>cleanliness</i>
Depth " "	Animals
Dist. from <i>this house</i>	Use
Dist. from n. house - <i>nearest house</i>	Yard, app. <i>appearance</i>
Dist. from stable	Drainage
Dist. from n. privy <i>nearest privy</i>	Ash, <i>scans</i>
Dist. from c. coop <i>chicken coop</i>	Cover, <i>adg. adequate</i>
No. families use. <i>ing well</i>	Bath t. <i>location</i>
Cistern, open, closed	Enclosed, open, plumb.
No. used ft. from house	Sinks trapped
Water piped into house	Smoke
City water acc. <i>essible</i>	Dumps
City Water in house	St. <i>net</i>
Hydrant	Fire <i>risks</i>
Nuisances.	Cesspool
	Dist. from well.

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under way, defects in the schedule became apparent. Because one of the incidental purposes of an investigation is to improve the technique, a few criticisms of this schedule may not be out of place here. Such criticisms may help others to avoid mistakes made by the author of this schedule.

As the schedule stands, it includes some questions which are unnecessary in a town like Urbana, such as the ones dealing with the question as to:

- Occupation of the landlord.
- Where the rent is paid.
- The amount of rent by the week.
- The attic, its use, etc.
- Backbedrooms.
- Cisterns.

The schedule, however, omits some valuable questions as to :

- The date at which the houses were built.
- Whether the occupants were all members of the household, related, or otherwise.
- The specific details which made for disrepair, untidiness, and unattractiveness.
- Whether open wells had curbing above ground.

The author of this report made all the investigations on which it is based. She attempted to go to every house in the district selected. At each house she asked the occupant to supply facts on all questions, the answers to which could not be had by an inspection of the premises. These questions pertained to the rent the landlord, the occupants of the house, etc. In almost every case the answers were readily - and probably accurately - given. The only exception was that to the question on the income of the family. As this was not an essential part of housing study, it was finally omitted. In some cases, vacant houses were included in the study. This meant that for them only partial schedules could be made out. However the figures pertaining to their wells etc. were considered valid.

Results of the Study
Sanitary Conditions



A desert of ashes.

Undoubtedly, the most striking fact revealed by this study altho suspected before it was made, is the fact that certain sanitary conditions in the part of Urbana investigated are bad.

Wells and Privies:

It was found that 88 out of the 100 houses inspected, are dependent upon wells, or cisterns, for their water supply, and that 96 houses have no toilets other than the privies in their yard. Of these houses, 34 are entirely outside of the zone of city water and sewer pipes; while 66 are within it.

Approximately 300 persons¹ live in these 96 houses, dependent on privies only.

Of the 88 houses dependent upon well water, 84 have wells on their own land. Thus 4 have to go into their neighbor's yards to get drinking water.

All 4 had cisterns or rain barrels for other water. However this means inconvenience in carrying drinking water and the pro-

1. As at the time of the survey several were temporarily vacant, no absolute number of persons could be determined.



bability that in dry seasons, the wells will be exhausted.

In one case in which the family had no well in their own yard, they drank water from a cistern for rain water. The only precaution which they took to insure clean water was to filter it thru a cloth which looked like an old piece of canvass.



Cow and well, side by side.

Of the 84 wells, only 7 are known to be drilled, while 40 were described as dug. The 37 others are probably dug, or partly dug and partly drilled. It is highly probable that they are subject to contamination thru their sides, if not over the top. It was found that few, if any, wells had such curbing at the top to keep ground water from flowing in at the time of a heavy rain. While every well has a cover of some description, most of these are of wood, thru which ground water and dust penetrate with the result that the water is contaminated.

Data on the depth of the wells were hard to procure. Some wells estimated¹, however, as being no more than from 10 to 20 feet in depth. Of these one is less than 50 feet² distant from the privy vault. Six of undetermined depth, are from 20 to 50 feet

1. In answering the question as to the depth of the wells, the occupants of the houses admitted that they were guessing.
2. The distances are not absolutely accurate since they were determined by stepping.

from the privy.

Sixty-nine of the wells are at a distance of from 10 to 30 feet from the house, being within range of the waste water thrown out (as in almost every case, it was) from the house.

In no case is the well water piped into the house so as to obviate the necessity of carrying water.

Out of the twelve cases in which ^{city water} is used ⁱⁿ only four is it piped into the house. In the other cases, it comes thru a hydrant in the yard.

Cisterns:

Complete notes were not taken on the cisterns. However it was observed that almost every house seen had one. In none of these cases was the cistern water piped.

In the one instance, noted before, the cistern water was used for drinking.

Privies:



Row of privies.

Of the 96 privies, none are screened so as to exclude flies.

Seventy-three are no nearer than 50 feet (the minimum set by ¹ law) from the house. This means, however, that 23 are within this limit. Of these, 6 are less than 30 feet from the house. Even a

1. City ordinances prohibit privies within fifty feet of a well.

distance of fifty feet may not be sufficient. What then can we say of a distance of less than 30 feet?

In 41 cases there are no walks leading to the privies. Of these, 31 are from 50 to 75 feet from the house. The difficulty of approaching these in rainy weather can easily be imagined.

In most instances the building, usually a separate one, is lighted only by a small, crecent-shaped opening and the doorway. In all cases there were doors. However, the majority of the buildings are none too firm, and are in need of paint.

In almost every case the approach to the building is in full view of the windows of neighboring houses and even the street. Certainly this makes for a lack of privacy.

When this objection to the privy is added to the one that it is always a source of disease, we can see that in having even 96 privies in a town - there are many more than this in the whole town - we have a very objectionable condition here.

Cesspools:

No cesspools were found in the area covered by this survey.

Cellars:

Questions concerning cellars brought out the fact 40 out of the 100 houses had none. Six out of these had as foundations a few piers which raised the house slightly above the ground. The rest had brick foundations, with ventilation provided by small gratings.

Twenty-nine of the cellars had concrete floors. The other 21 had dirt floors. Eleven of the dirt floors and 8 of the concrete (19 in all) were reported as "damp". Eleven of these damp

cellars were on Criminal Hill. One of the latter had in it at the time of the investigation at least one-half foot of water. In five cases, where the cellars were damp, the cellar windows were broken. The fact that 11 cellars, out of 37 on Criminal Hill were damp indicates that the drainage system must be inadequate. The entrance of rain through the broken windows may account for some of the dampness.

In all cases the ceilings of the cellars are at least 18 inches above ground.

Only 5 people reported any use for their cellar other than that of storage. Out of these 2 reported that there is a furnace in the cellar. Three said they cooked there. All 3 of these latter cellars are lighted by windows; all had concrete floors, ~~and the~~ *As the houses are* ~~ceilings~~ built on a hill side, part of the cellar ~~was~~ level with the ground. All of these also are reported as being dry.

In a number of places, old barrels and pieces of wood were strewn about the cellar.

Yards, Outhouses, etc:

In 96 cases the privy shed stands in the yard. Besides this in 76 cases there are, one or more other outbuildings. These consist of chicken coops, stables, wood sheds, rabbit pens and pig pens. In at least 39 yards there are chicken coops. As a rule, in these yards, the chickens are running about free. In only 6 are there barns. However in 9 there are pig pens containing pigs. This is contrary to city ordinances. In one place there is a barn, a pig pen, and chicken coop and privy on a piece of land not more than 50 by 150 feet. In most cases, even where there are as many



Back yards

buildings asⁱⁿ this in one yard, the area is larger. This means, that in spite of these buildings, there is no overcrowding of the land by them.

In at least 8 cases the outbuildings were extremely delapidated, looking as if they might fall to pieces at any time. These same buildings were also all reported as being dirty, old boxes, pieces of wood, and various kinds of refuse being strewn about in them. Six of the yards which ~~contained~~ there were characterized as being cluttered up with old cans, piles of ashes, etc. In all such yards there were 8 delapidated out-buildings of various uses, including chicken coops of several sizes..

However the really delapidated outbuildings and extremely cluttered yards were the exception rather than the rule. Still owing to the fact that the town lacks a public system for the collection of garbage and ashes, in every yard there was an accumulation of ashes and cans of greater, or less^{or} magnitude.

Drainage of yards:

Only two yards were reported as having poor drainage; that is, that they retained water even in fairly dry seasons. These two were on Criminal Hill. At the time of the investigation of the houses in that locality, all the yards there were muddy, as the investigation was made soon after a heavy rain.

Dumps, etc.



Dumps

Within 200 yards of some houses on Criminal Hill is the public dumping ground, containing all kinds of refuse and inhabited by a countless number of rats. It is possible that much of the dust and many of the bacteria from this dumping ground are carried by the wind and the rats, to the houses on the Hill.

A series of small dumps was noted, scattered about one of the dwellings. Since most of these piles are beside the road, it is likely that they were made by others, rather than the people in the house.

Sewerage Disposal Plant:



Sewerage Disposal Plant

Even more of a menace to the people on the Hill than the dumping ground, is the sewerage disposal plant. This is not more than 100 yards from one house on the Hill and not a much greater distance from others. As this is neglected, the effluent is highly

obnoxious. The plant is taxed far beyond its capacity.

Plumbing:

In the few cases where plumbing is found, the sinks are trapped, the plumbing is open, and appears to be in good order.

In spite, however, of the presence of wells, subject to contamination, of privies, and other unsanitary conditions, reports of the Urbana Board of Health, show but one case of typhoid in the district surveyed, within the last five years. Statistics taken on all diseases, do not show that they are any more prevalent in this district, than in other parts of Urbana. However, students of sanitation, all claim that such conditions as this study shows, are conducive to much typhoid, and other diseases, and therefore, we have no right to rest on the assumption that conditions in this part of Urbana should be left as they are.

LAND AND ROOM OVER CROWDING

Land Crowding:

In the area covered by this survey - as in Urbana as a whole - there is no overcrowding of the land; the houses are so far apart that each receives plenty of light and air. In every instance, the houses investigated are built on relatively good sized lots, approximately 50 by 150 feet in area. The greater number of houses have a ground dimension of about 20 by 25 feet. Thus they cover not more than 6% of the lot on which they were built.

Height of houses:

Only 13 of the 100 houses are two stories high. The other 87 are one, or one and half stories in height. None are more

than two stories high. Hence none can be said to overshadow other houses.

Distance between houses:

Thirty-four of the 100 houses are less than 35 feet apart. Twenty-two of these houses have windows which are opposite one another. When we consider how near these houses are, it is easy to realize that sounds can readily travel from one window to the other; also the inhabitants of the houses, can not insure themselves privacy, without the use of curtains, or shades. If two houses fairly near each other, can be so planned that the windows on their sides are not opposite each other, the residents are thereby insured greater privacy, desirable at all times. However, there is really nothing very serious about this.

Room Crowding:



Two-room house.

The worst case of room crowding found is that in which 5 people, live in 2 rooms. Four of these 5 are adults. In this case, one of the two rooms has to serve as a kitchen, dining-room, and general living room, as well as, a bed-room. In another case 5 people live in 3 rooms. As 3 of these are children under 5 years

of age, this condition is not deplorable. In 5 cases, 7 people live in 4 rooms. In all of these cases, there are but 2 adults in the family, the others being children under 14 years of age. In the latter cases, one room of the four, has to serve as both living room and bed-room, while another is completely set aside for the kitchen, the living conditions can not be ^{said} ~~said~~ to be so crowded as to endanger health, or morals.

Size of rooms; ventilation:

In no house visited, is there a bed-room, or a room used as a bed-room, less than 8 by 10 by 10 feet. This means a capacity of 800 cu. ft. ~~Only are required for one person by law.~~

Every bed-room seen with the exception of those in the apartment house which will be described later, has in it, at least one ordinary sized window (two and one-half by six feet).

Kind of Rooms; Closets, etc.

All the houses have some kind of "front room" in which to receive callers. Thirty-eight have besides this, a dining-room.

Ten houses were reported as having no pantry, or closets of any kind.

The 90 others have pantrys, or closets, or both.

Few houses have attics of any kind, and none of these are reported as used.

Construction of houses:

The point brought out by this study is that all but one of the houses seen are frame houses. Some of these houses are within the fire limits, which means that if they were built since the 1916

ordinances were drawn up, they probably violate the law.¹ There is nothing to show that they were built since this time.

HEAT & LIGHT

Furnaces:

In only two houses visited is there a furnace, the other 98 houses are dependent upon stoves for heat. Few if any bed-rooms seen have even a stove in them, but receive such warmth as they can get from the kitchen, or living room, stove.

Lamps:

Sixty-six of the houses seen are dependent upon oil lamps, or other than gas or electric lights, for their illumination.

FIRE HAZARDS

Serious defects in the housing situation in Urbana brought out by this study is the lack of adequate fire protection for the houses on Criminal Hill. The only possible aid in case of fire is the hose kept at the Big Four Shops and there connected with the city water supply. No other hydrant is within a quarter of a mile of the Hill. For the houses south of the shops there are available at least four fire hydrants affording adequate protection. In no case is one of these houses more than a block away from a hydrant. .

Whether the chimneys, etc. in the houses seen are safely constructed was not determined by this survey.

The lack of fire escapes on apartment houses will be discussed in the paragraph describing apartment houses.

1. According to the city ordinances, by special permission of the City Council wooden buildings may be built within fire limits.

NOISE, SMOKE AND DANGER FROM TRAINS

All the houses visited are exposed to the smoke and cinders from the Big Four trains, a source of much noise and possible danger to the inhabitants of the part of town surveyed. The fact that the tracks are absolutely unguarded, makes them dangerous to children.

STREETS



A source of mud or dust.

Added to the smoke from the trains, in summer, especially, there is the dust which is blown up from the unpaved streets on which these houses are situated. All but Main Street are unpaved. At any time during the year, these same streets are very apt to be muddy.

Aside from the inconvenience caused by the dust and mud of the streets, is the depressing effect which their untidy appearance presents.

GENERAL APPEARANCES OF HOUSES.

As may be easily imagined, the houses of the section of Urbana covered by this survey, are for the most part unattractive in appearance, due not so much to their construction and repair, as to the lack

of care and of paint. Their ugliness lies largely in the fact that, with few exceptions, they are surrounded by untidy yards, such as characterize rented houses.

Due to the unpaved, uncared-for streets, the unpainted houses, and unkempt yards, the whole community presents an unattractive appearance, certainly stultifying to any potential aesthetic taste in the children who live in the midst of it. We must probably grant that the majority of adults there, have lost this sense, or they would not permit all conditions to be as they are.

LODGERS

In spite of the fact that the part of town visited is near the Big Four Shops, where presumably many single men work, in only one household visited were there unrelated lodgers. Here, four men were living with a family of three in a six room house.



PEOPLE

All the families living in the houses visited during this survey were American. One family was negro.

APARTMENT HOUSES.

In the district selected for the survey, there are no apartment houses. Nowever near this district there is one which was said to

be poorly built - the worst in town. Believing that this study of the worst housing conditions in Urbana would not be complete unless a part of it consisted in looking into the worst conditions in multiple, as well as single dwellings, this apartment house was investigated. It is ~~the one~~ called "The Stratford".

Dark Rooms:

The results of the study showed that out of the 22 apartments of three or four rooms each, 16 contained one or two rooms with small windows opening only into the dimly lighted halls, which run thru the center of the building. These rooms were intended for bed-rooms and are so used in all the occupied apartments.

Toilets:

While the building is equipped with modern plumbing and sanitary fixtures, there are no toilets, wash bowls, or tubs of any kind in the apartments. In place of these there are, on each floor, at the end of the hall, two toilets and across from these a bath tub. Each of these three fixtures is separated from the others. However on the first floor only, is any attempt made to label the toilets, differentiating the one for men, from the one for women. On each floor one toilet has an outside window, while the other is ventilated only by an opening in the partition which set it off from the other one. Both contain electric lights. There are no public sinks in the halls.

All the toilets and the tubs were quite clean in appearance. The Janitress said that she cleaned them twice a week.

Clothes closet:

In each apartment is but one clothes closet.

Basement:

The basement ^{which} is largely used as a place to store coal, contains the furnace and four set laundry tubs; has a concrete floor and is dry. It was however, at the time of the investigation, cluttered up with piles of old papers, and other rubbish.

Fire hazards:

The fire hazards of this building seem to be unnecessarily great. Altho it contains 22 apartments and is 3 stories high, with only one non-fireproof staircase connecting the floors, it has no fire-escapes. The building is of brick, but the ceiling of the basement is composed only of wooden beams, and the boards which form the first floor. Should any kind of a blaze start in the cellar, the probability is, that the whole first floor would soon be in flames. On the front of the building are four porches. These, however, would not serve as fire-escapes. No where in the building ~~are~~ there any fire extinguishers in sight.

Rent of apartments:

The apartments just described rent from \$15.00 to \$20.00 a month. This rent includes steam heat.

RENT

A part of this study of housing conditions consisted in a study of rents. Out of the 100 houses, 33 are owned, or are being bought on the installment plan. In twelve cases no answer was given in regard to rent. Out of the 55 remaining houses that

were known to be leased, 20 are rented for \$10.00 a month and 30 for amounts ranging from \$7.00 to \$10.00. All the \$10.00 houses consist of four or five rooms and all are in the part of town south of the Big Four Shops. Some of the \$7.00, \$8.00 and \$9.00 houses consist also of 4 or 5 rooms but these were situated, in most part on the Hill. The assessed value for taxation of the various houses differ, but it was found that the houses renting for \$7.00, or \$8.00 a month, or \$63.00 or \$74.00 a year, are assessed at \$200.00 to \$230.00 (Real value being three times as great, or \$60.00 to \$690). Roughly speaking, these houses are bringing in about 10% gross return in the form of rent. As the tax rate is this year 1.89%, the return is reduced at least that amount. The making of repairs, naturally reduce it still more.

The houses renting for \$10.00 a month, or \$112.00 per year, are assessed for amounts varying from \$300.00 to \$400.00. This means a gross return of about 10% on the investment.

Only 5 of the landlords of the 55 rented houses are non-resident. Out of the 31 different landlords about whom data were obtained, only 7 live outside of Urbana or Champaign. Seventeen of these live in the neighborhood of the houses which they are renting. In several cases they live next door. In almost every case the tenants are expected to take the rent to their landlord, or his agent. However, as in so many cases the landlords live near their property, it is likely that they see it often.

SUMMARY

Summing up the results of the study of the houses of the northeast of Urbana, we find that:

1. Sanitary conditions there are bad, due to:

- A. Lack of sewer connections; viz.- in 96 out of 100 houses.
- B. Lack of connections with city water supply; viz. -in 88 out of 100 cases the well water necessarily used is liable to contamination.
- C. Lack of adequate drainage of yards and cellars.
- D. The presence of animals, cows, pigs, chickens, rats, etc, neglected buildings, and rubbish in yards.
- E. Proximity of the inadequately operated sewage disposal plant.
- F. Vicinity of the public dumping grounds.
- G. Open ditches carrying waste water.
- H. Unlighted, poorly ventilated rooms in the apartment house investigated.
- I. Lack of outside windows in the toilets in the apartment house.

2. Fire risks in certain places are excessive due to:

- A. Lack of city fire hydrants.
- B. Lack of fire-escapes on apartment house.¹
- C. Flimsy construction of quick-burning buildings, especially in the first floor where no fire-proofing is used.
- D. Use of wooden stairs in apartment house.
- E. Lack of more than one inside stair-way in apartment house.
- F. Presence of inflammable rubbish in the cellar of the apartment house.
- G. Presence of wooden buildings, or roofs within the fire-limits. (This danger may, however, be slight).

1. Here an apartment house is any multiple dwelling designed for three, or more families.

3. The housing presents other objectionable features, which make for discomfort, lack of privacy, and general lowering of ideals or standard of living such as:

- A. Absence of running water in the house.
- B. Lack of toilet facilities in separate dwellings, or in each apartment in apartment houses.
- C. Scanty provisions for clothes closets, pantries, etc.
- D. Lack of gas and electricity.
- E. Lack of furnaces.
- F. Presence of dark rooms in apartment houses.
- G. Placing of windows opposite each other in the walls of adjacent houses.
- H. Crowding of people in rooms, in a few instances, but a tendency which ^{now} is increasing).
- I. Presence of dust, also mud from streets, smoke and trains.

4. The general effect of the houses together with their immediate surroundings is depressing since:

- A. Many of the houses are unpainted and unattractive in appearance.
- B. Many of the yards are neglected.
- C. The streets are unpaved and uncared for.
- D. Few trees, shrubs, or gardens are found.

5. There is danger arising from the fact that

- A. The tracks of the railroad which runs near the houses surveyed, are unguarded.

6. Urbana is practically free, as far as can be judged from the results of the survey, from

- A. The big city problem of overcrowding, both of land and of houses. Owing to the fact that the population shows little signs of rapid increase, also that Urbana is surrounded on all sides by open country, it seems unlikely that it will have this problem.
- B. The problem of unrelated lodgers living in the homes of

the working men.

These, then are the defects in housing found in Urbana, Ill., by this study. Whether there are other kinds of defects in housing in the city, or whether there are more of the same kind, this study does not undertake to prove. However these alone detract from the town. True no conclusive proof has been given that these have harmed the people, still; we know as a matter of common knowledge, that such conditions are ^apotential source of danger, not only to the people that live in the midst of them, but to all others in the town.

CONCLUSION

Suggested Remedies.

Having seen what is the housing problem of Urbana, as demonstrated by this investigation, a study of remedies is now in order.

1. As a first step toward remedying the situation, a campaign to arouse public opinion to a point where housing defects of any kind are intolerable to it, would be desirable. Such a campaign would consist of lectures, demonstrations, articles in the newspapers, courses in school, and any other means of conveying information as to the danger of such housing defects.

2. A next step would be to see that existing ordinances dealing with housing are enforced. The following ordinances^{1 & 2} if properly enforced would help meet the situation pertaining to

1. Sanitary Requirements in Building.
2. Cess Pools.
3. Location of Cess Pools.
4. Location of Fixtures.
5. Stairs.
6. Vaults.
7. Windows in Lodging or Apartment Buildings.
8. Light and Air Courts, For Habitable Rooms.

1. City Ordinances, City of Urbana, 1916.

2. While the construction of the apartment house violates some of these ordinances, this fact does not prove that the ordinances are not enforced, since the house was built before the ordinances were drawn up. However the fact that some privies are within 50 feet of wells, that chickens run at large, that refuse, which is likely to become offensive is found, points to the conclusion that the ordinances are not enforced.

9. Maximum Amount of Lot to be Covered by Apartment or Dwelling.
10. Nuisances.
11. Permits for Wooden Buildings within Fire Limits.
12. Permission given for Erection of Wooden Buildings if Expedient.
13. Wooden Buildings to be Enlarged or Removed

Having a regular inspector of housing, whose duty it was to go periodically to all houses in the town, looking for all possible defects, would be helpful. This office of inspector of housing, might be combined with the present one of the building inspector, or that of health officer. However, whatever the arrangement made, the inspector of housing, should not wait until he receives a complaint before making his inspection.

3. After providing for the proper enforcement of ordinances, inadequate old ones should be revised and new ones made. The one which allows trapped plumbing to be placed in a room where there is a system of ventilation, even if not a window in an external wall, should be revised, so as to prohibit plumbing from being placed in rooms which have no windows in an external wall. Otherwise, by a loose interpretation of "system of ventilation", plumbing will be placed in dark, improperly ventilated rooms.

The ordinance (7i) dealing with stairs should be amended as to provide that stairs be lighted in the day time by natural light, either thru windows or thru a skylight, and at night by gas or electricity.

New ordinances be enacted demanding that:

The first floor, at least, of multiple dwellings be of

fire-proof material.

The stairs in multiple dwellings be of fire-proof material.

No rubbish be allowed to remain in the basement of any multiple dwelling.

Each apartment in a multiple dwelling have separate toilet and bath.

Landlords provide at least 500 cu. ft. of air for each occupant of a bed -room.

Separate dwellings and apartments, should each contain at least one pantry, and one clothes closet, for each bed room.

Windows in the walls of houses which are less than 50 feet apart, be placed so as not to be opposite each other.

The railroad tracks be fenced off, or otherwise guarded when they lie within 200 feet of any dwelling.

4. Another very urgent step to be taken, is the one of having the citizens, by one means or another, extend the sewer and water mains so that they are accessible to all houses. Preferably, the city should own the water supply. Thru appropriation of a general fund, or by assessing the cost against the property affected, these conveniences should be made available for everyone.

5. At the same time, the city should be induced to move and improve the sewage disposal plant, and the city dumps, to a place far from any dwellings.

6. The city should also be persuaded to fill all open ditches likely to carry sewage, providing at the same time a system of drainage that would carry off the water formerly found in these, and all superfluous ground water.

7. A desirable move would be, to have the city, possibly in combination with Champaign, own the gas and electric plants. This might insure cheaper light and heat. The city should pay for them no more than they are worth. A state commission might very properly be appointed to estimate their value.

8. Encouraging the people of Urbana to own rather than rent their homes might give an impetus to better housing. A man will tolerate in a rented house, what he would never tolerate in one he owns.

9. Next, the erection of a few model houses for workingmen, either by the city, by a corporation, or by philanthropic individuals, might also raise by example the standard of housing.

10. Possibly raising the wage scale, and perhaps giving the workers more time to spend in their homes, would improve the housing conditions. Men are usually willing to spend money for improvements if they only have it. Also they will plant gardens and improve the appearance of their places if they are not too exhausted from their day's work, and have a little extra time.

However, back of these efforts just enumerated, must be high ideals for one's self, and for one's community; and these ideals are dependent upon the factor mentioned as the very first remedy - education.

.....

We have now seen the housing problem of Urbana as set forth by this study; also some suggested remedies for it. What will Urbana do? It is well within its power to apply most, if not all of the remedies, and comparatively speaking the problem is a simple one, especially when we consider the resources of Urbana, both financial and human. However, it is not one that can with im-

punity be neglected. Let us, therefore, without delay set about remedying it, thereby enabling Urbana to become an even better community than it now is.

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